



Alan Small
I've had
it with
Leaf fans

"Hey, how about that Rusty Courtnall?! And Eddie Olczyk." This is the usual sewage coming out of the mouths of Toronto Maple Leaf fans. I'm really quite tired of it.

You have to say one thing about those Leaf fans. They never jump off the bandwagon. No matter how pathetic their team is, and they've been pathetic for years now, they stick with them like Steve Kasper does to Wayne Gretzky.

People say to me, "They're red hot now, aren't they?" Yes they are playing .500 hockey. Which is about as hot as Leaf hockey gets.

Heaven help other people who actually like some of the other teams in the league. If you happen to think Gretzky is a half-decent hockey player, these Leaf fans label you a wimp or start-questioning your sexual persuasion. Then they start talking about the six-team league, as if they know something about it.

These Leaf fans also complain about the amount of Europeans in the NHL. They say that they don't go into the corners and they don't play defence very well. Well, except for Borje Salming. Frycer can forecheck well.

A guy like Tomas Sandstrom make lives miserable with his scoring touch and his antagonistic play. There are not too many snipers better than Jari Kurri. Heck, even Don Cherry likes Mats Naslund.

But what gives the Leafs that fanatic-like appeal, similar to the fanaticism given to the Ayatollah Khomeini? Or the Chicago Cubs?

I don't know. Hab fans don't live and die with their team like the Leaf fans do. They are some of the most discriminating fans in the league. When their team plays badly, the Montreal fans let them know it. When they are on top of their game, like they were two seasons ago, their fans scream as loudly as any.

Maybe that's the problem with the Leafs. Their fans blindly follow the club no matter how badly they play. If they would forget about them when they are lousy, maybe Ballard & Company will get their act together and maybe assemble a team that will go above .500. The Leaf organization knows that the Gardens will be sold out until Armageddon, so why should they spend the bucks to get a good team that can win on a regular basis.

Only one thing is missing from the Leaf fans ranting and raving. I've heard very little about Wendel Clark this year. Oh ya, he's injured and will be out until January. That's a whole month and a half I don't hear something about him. What a relief.

Ice Team head for Manitoba this week

by Alan Small

The U of A hockey Bears are taking their second place standing in Canada West this weekend to Winnipeg as they take on the University of Manitoba Bisons.

The Bisons, who are 5-5 this season, have lost many of their big players this season due to graduation, like Chris Saint-Cyr who was an All-Canadian for three consecutive years, 1985-87. They also lost last season's top scorer Harry Mahood and are missing their fifth top scorer, Rick Strachan.

"Sometimes we're great defensively and we can't put the puck in the ocean," Bison coach Barry Trotz said, "Sometimes we score a lot and we let a lot of goals in. We're lacking a lot of consistency."



The Bears will try to stickhandle around Manitoba Bisons this weekend.

file photo

Part of that lack of consistency has to do with having 28 players in camp, and having the amount of injuries the Bisons have had this season.

"We have a whole new cast this season," Trotz said.

The Bisons will emphasize the same style as the Bears show, one that puts a lot of pressure and

forces the opponents to make a mistake.

"We're getting back to our style of hockey," Trotz said, "With all of the injuries we've had, we're defensive conscious and have slowed the game down. Our younger guys will have to come to the forefront."

Players like Steve Brown, who has 18 points on the season and is

seventh in the conference in scoring.

If they are going to be successful against the Golden Bears, they'll have to have a quick transition from defence to offence, like Calgary did against the U of A last weekend. They will also have to switch back to the defence quickly.

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Weekend test for U of A volleyball

by Alan Small

The Bear and Panda volleyball clubs will have their work cut out for them as they go to the west coast to battle the UBC T-Birds and the University of Victoria.

Both U of A clubs have a lot of rookies breaking into university volleyball this year, but are still hoping for bigger and better things than last year, when both the Bears and Pandas had losing seasons.

"A split is what I expect," Bear coach Pierre Baudin said, "We have a decent chance to win both if we play to our potential."

"Victoria will be a tougher match," Panda coach Suzi Smith said of her chances, "we'll have a better shot against UBC."

It will be the next tough test for the rebuilding Pandas, after coming off a split at home to the University of Saskatchewan.

The Bears, on the other hand will be opening their season in British Columbia.

Volleyball

"Victoria will be a hell of a battle," Baudin said, "they've recruited some strong veteran players for this season."

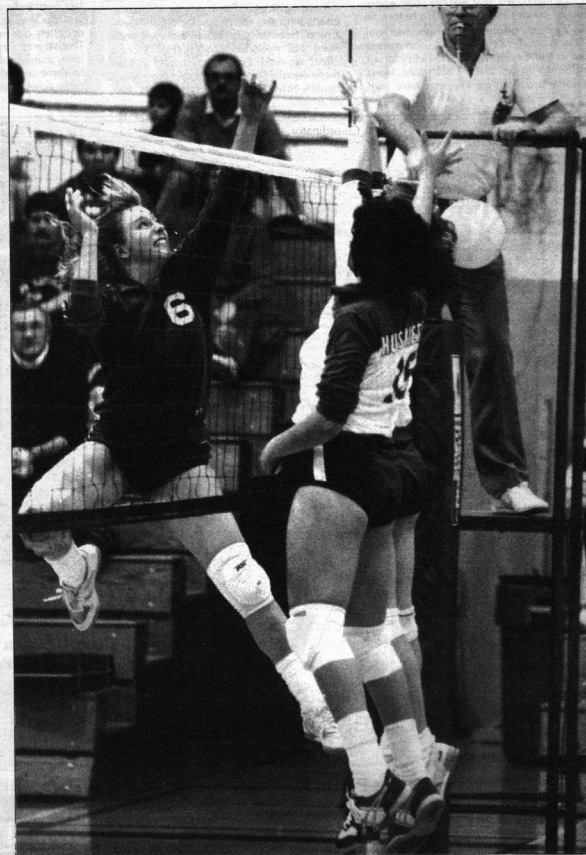
Last year, Baudin's Bears swept a young Vikings squad in the three matches that year, while losing all the matches they played against UBC.

"They (UBC) aren't as strong as last year," Baudin said, "but we aren't either."

Smith's Pandas were swept by both BC clubs last season, and things aren't going to be much easier, as both UBC and UVic are in the top ten in the country.

Saskatchewan was also a top ten club, though, and the pandas gave them a tough time in the two matches they played here. Smith is expecting more of the same from her troops this weekend on the coast.

LAST SPIKES: Bear middle blockers Dean Kakoschke and Ben Spiller will make the trip but will not be 100% as Kakoschke is nursing a sprained thumb and Spiller is sick with the flu. Also, right side player Darcy Dueck has a sore knee from an exhibition match earlier in the week. Baudin though, said they will be playing this weekend.



Terry Wildeman pounds one off a Saskatchewan block.

Photo Rob Galbraith